that the whole chain of organic being, from man down to the humble spire of grass, is only a manifestation of life in different degrees of development, then are we all personally interested in this inquiry. Human physiology will progress, and the noble art of healing be better understood, in proportion as the student examines the expression of life in the inferior organic forms. It is in plants that mineral matter first becomes endowed with life. It is there that we meet with its earliest humblest indications. The vegetable world is formed out of mineral matter for the support of animal life. Hence almost every plant is frequented by some insect with organs beautifully constructed and adapted to the organization of the plant, on which the insect subsists for food. It is by the chemistry of Nature that mineral matter is changed into vegetable; and, when it enters the animal, it undergoes another transmutation, and becomes animal matter. He who would study the laws of life as revealed in the animal world ought not to neglect the vegetable world, on which animals depend for their food, or rather for their very existence. In the order of Nature, the study of wild flowers ought certainly to precede the study of wild animals. Botany would seem to have a prior claim to every other branch of natural history.

Linnæus and his scholars have generally written in Latin. They addressed themselves to anatomists, physicians, and philosophers, and not to the people, or they would have adopted a different language as a means of communicating thought. I shall endeavor to copy Nature in her simplicity, and to conduct my readers by a plain and easy pathway to the noble temple of Flora; and, when they shall catch a glimpse of the glorious interior, of the play of those magnificent laws of life of which man is the highest expression, and which operate in the production of the vast chain of organic being beneath him, there is no difficulty which they will not attempt to surmount, in order to learn more about those beautiful forms of life called plants, and to solve the problem of their growth and reproduction.

MY SIX LAST COOKS.

An unexceptionable character, setting forth every excellent quality, was almost more than we needed to influence our decision in favor of a most pleasing, sensible, middle-aged woman. There was a respectability in her appearance which warranted the extravagant idea of having found *a treasure*. She proved herself a treasure of information, and her private history must ever remain an enigma. We were complaining to her, *sotto voce*, that some workmen on the premises seemed very idle; she immediately in excellent, almost Parisian, French, expressed her acquiescence in our opinion, and we continued the necessary conversation of giving many orders in a newly-finished house in that language. We soon discovered she was equally conversant with German. We asked her to assist in making some table linen; she regretted her eyes had suffered so much from a Neapolitan sun as to incapacitate her from neat sewing work. A French priest had been a very kind friend to her on the Continent. She had broken her leg in the Tyrol, and had lost her property in America. We had proofs of the truth of all she said: but a conviction that we had no pretension to call ourselves mistress in our own house; that we were never more to eat a dinner of our own ordering, nor be permitted to have a wish, however modest, gratified, whilst this polyglot, overbearing, clever, and traveled woman reigned in the kitchen, obliged us, in these days of rebellion, to rebel; and we, gently and in proper terms, explained that we desired to be president of our own household, *with* a ministry that followed orders. Her place was supplied by a *Paragon*; six years' character from her last place left no doubt that we were decidedly *suited*. Oh! that word; how much it does comprehend! Paragon wore little natural ringlets; we wished so much they had been assisted by art, we could have suggested a little less exuberance in that particular. She used very choice language, would occasionally regret she had received an indifferent *bolletin* of her mother's health; and in lamenting "that the beauteous days of summer were o'er," would ask gracefully, and with a lisp, "what vegetation was to be served that day." Whilst Paragon fulfilled her duties which came under our observation, we could not object to the rosewood desk, taken from the drawer of the kitchen-dresser, and sentimentally placed for immediate use; nor did we make any observation on accidentally intruding in the regions of this refined cook, and seeing her, with an ornamented pen, writing verses—an Ode, possibly, to a patty-pan. Six months we were gracefully and poetically served; one morning, with a more marked lisp, we were begged to "suit ourselves" at our earliest convenience. Cook said, "she found that her talents were completely rusting in our service; in the simple and quiet habits of the family, we gave no opportunity for their display."—What could we say? We mentally ejaculated something very like a wish, Paragon might go further and fare worse.

A sickly cook succeeded. She had been crossed in love—tea-caddy, every household necessary purchased—she had been deserted for another. A tear moistened the hashed mutton—sudden despair would seize her in the act of whipping a cream; and she would sink on the nearest chair, and give way to a

burst of sorrow for her melancholy state. There was no alternative. We grieve to see others suffer, and particularly hopelessly. We murmured a kind advice to be cheerful; and at length being unable to cheer this Niobe, who, in the solitude of her own room each evening, would indulge her feelings of anguish, and would *not* come out to make the toast, to the housemaid's great disgust, we were necessitated to suggest change of air and scene, and excited a hope that, in a town residence, the faithless swain might possibly be replaced by some disengaged butcher or green-grocer's man.

Annoyed at our ill-fortune, we once more tried our fate, and, striving to keep clear of our last disasters, engaged one who, having been kitchen-maid in a gentleman's family, had little chance of being poetical, and who decidedly had a cheerful countenance. Alas! her countenance was cheerful through the aid of a cheerful glass. Although *warranted* sober and honest, and useful and active, she, to the shame of those who recommended her, in one short fortnight was almost always under the influence of strong drink; took her butter money to pay her bill at the neighboring public house; was seldom awake enough to be useful; and her activity resulted in tumbling up-stairs to bed, without setting herself on fire. Her knowledge of existing facts was so keen that, on inquiry being made for the portion which was left of a birth-day pudding, she exclaimed, "Please, ma'am, nurse say we ate that there pudding." Willing to find some good in so much inconvenience as a new change in the kitchen dynasty, we endeavored to believe a friend's assurance that it was a great comfort that the house had not been burned over our heads, during the brief career of Cheerful Susan.

A short interregnum followed, whilst we despairingly sought amongst the advertisements of accomplished cooks for one who could exist without the presence of a man-servant, and anxiously carried on a diligent correspondence with M. P., M. D., S. Z., and E. F., who each individually testified their sense of their own excellence, by asking such wages as would prove a tempting salary to many a poor governess. At length a pleasing-looking, simply dressed person, appeared, and it is to be concluded we were mutually pleased with each other, for all preliminaries were settled, and she was engaged. She had with some skill concealed the turn of her mind, which was an insatiable love of the admiration of others, and a very extensive private admiration for her own attractions. Before a week elapsed, rumors reached the drawing-room of such elaborate toilettes every evening, that, as the only single man in the house was the eldest son of the family, not yet three years old, and not capable consequently of appreciating her attractions, little hope remained that so much labor would be long exercised, where it was in vain. At all hours, when she was likely to meet her mistress's eyes, her costume was unexceptionable; but when the dinner and its appointments were hastily cleared away, a canvas-worked footstool and private hearth-rug were placed before the fire, a red table-cloth, from her own box, covered the kitchen table, and thus the attributes being in keeping, as far as possible, cook returned from her room, beflounced and belaced—watch, chain, *breloques*, all *en suite*, and a cap which rivaled the daintiest Parisian fashion. Our apprehension that a quiet gentleman's family in the country was no resting-place for such a butterfly, proved correct. Psyche and her mistress unanimously agreed to part after a month's trial, and most positively had we realized, in our various experiences, the painful fact of too frequently ill-directed effects of the march of intellect and the love of dress.

It may be some consolation to young housekeepers to know that comfort and confidence in *cooks* are not quite unattainable in these days, when servants *in general* are unwilling to abide by the catechism of their youth, and "do their duty in the station in which it has pleased God to place them." A neat, sober, cheerful, unromantic person, and one who speaks no language but her own, and that not faultlessly, now fulfils the daily routine of simple duty. Psyche, Bacchante, Niobe, Paragon, and Polyglot, having run their short race, we can only rejoice in the respectability of our sixth and, we hope, for many years, last cook.

SONG.

You have stolen my heart! Oh, do not delay
To give back the heart you have stolen away!
'Tis a heart full of love, and its every thought
With the deepest, the truest affection is fraught:
It is not deceptive—it does not conceal
One thought, save the depths of the love it can feel.
Then give back my heart! Oh, do not delay
To give back the heart you have stolen away!

It is not a trifling one—nay, it would spurn
To accept of a love that it could not return;
But when for another it changes its own,
It will love with the truest affection alone.
Such, such is the heart you have stolen away;
Then, pray, give it back without further delay.

And, true as the ivy, it fondly will fling
Its tendrils around, and confidingly cling
To the one that it loves, ne'er forgetting its plight,
Through sunshine or storm 'twill forever be bright.
Oh! give back my heart—pray, do not delay—
The heart you've so wilfully stolen away.

Oh! give back my heart, or another to fill
The vacuum left;—let the one you give thrill
In response to my own. Oh! let it reveal
One-half of the love my own heart can feel.
If not, I can never receive it in pay
For the fond, loving heart you have stolen away.